



Chairman Robert Aderholt

*Subcommittee on Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies
House Committee on Appropriations*

**Office of the Inspector General Hearing for FY 2017
Opening Statement As Prepared
February 12, 2016**

Welcome to the Agriculture Appropriations Subcommittee's third hearing for FY 2017. I'm sure my colleagues will agree that we are off to a quick and good start this year.

I have already shared in some detail the themes I have set to guide the Subcommittee's work for FY 2017. As a reminder, they are 1) Increasing Oversight, Efficiency, and Need for Effective Outcomes; 2) Keeping Rural America Vibrant; 3) Supporting American Farmers, Ranchers and Producers; and 4) Protecting the Health of People, Plants and Animals.

Today, I will focus on Theme #1 – Increasing Oversight, Efficiency, and Need for Effective Outcomes. This builds off of our oversight activities over the past several years. It also corresponds with the Inspector General's efforts on these issues.

Ms. Fong, we look forward to learning more about your work to encourage USDA to improve its governance processes and internal controls and to be more disciplined and transparent in its decision-making. This Subcommittee respects your work and appreciates your recommendations on ways to continuously improve the management of a large, complex, and important part of the Federal Government. In fact, the Subcommittee recognized your important work and included directives related to improper payments and unachieved savings in its FY 2016 report to the Secretary, among others.

The Committee also recognizes your leadership among the IG community. Not only did you lead the Council for Inspectors General on Integrity and Efficiency, which represents the entire IG community, but your work won every single one of the awards that the Council gives out for 2015. You should be proud of your work, Ms. Fong.

I would also like to thank you for agreeing to the request of Mr. Farr and myself to review the *New York Times'* allegations about the U.S. Meat Animal Research Center in Clay Center, Nebraska. Your assistance in auditing the claims included in the article and reviewing the current conditions, practices, and policies will be helpful to us. We look forward to having an update on your work on this issue.

I would like to thank him for the cooperative and collegial working relationship that we have. While we sometimes have different priorities, we both want USDA to be effective and efficient in implementing the laws and programs Congress gives it for the benefit of the American people. Ms. Fong, you and your staff help us with this. Thank you.

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